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## From the Editors

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## From the Editors

*Albert C. DeCiccio and Joan Mullin*

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*Culture, acculturation, critical consciousness, context:* these words have worked themselves into the research vocabulary of scholars who look at what it is we do when we write and when we teach others about writing. This issue of *The Writing Center Journal* focuses on our own culture: the activities that both create and define it from within and without. The authors herein examine tacit assumptions from within our academic community that have created the idea of a writing center, and they question constructs from the larger culture that contribute to our practices and theories—those worth questioning because of their subtle but important impact on who we are and how we construct our spaces.

Jane Cogie begins by looking at how much more effective our tutoring of ESL students can be. As other practitioners who see the need to question one of the founding ideas—that a writing center tutor must not direct or teach—Cogie makes a case for reconsidering those activities in light of research on second language learning. Drawing on her experience in a boys' school, Meg Tipper's article suggests we look more carefully at research on the "feminizing" of composition. Tipper examines the engendered developmental and social differences which may affect male and female attitudes towards writing centers and the work done in them—those which can impact the effectiveness of our tutors.

The last two articles perfectly pair each other: one focuses on the constructed student, the other on the constructed tutor. Anis Bawarshi and Stephanie Pelkowski look at how practices that first formed the idea of a "writing center" may have excluded students from the very conversations that can teach them to write. Peter Vandenberg asks how our construction of those practices for our tutors may have excluded them from conversations crucial to their training and to the future growth of writing centers. Have our assumptions—formed within and outside of the academy—"colonized" students in ways which undermine our tutoring? Has our training "colonized" our tutors, forwarding sanitized (and unrealistic), constructed images out of which we expect them to work?

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All of these authors pick at our assumptions, peeling back the layers of our reflective practice to reveal to us pieces of the tacit knowledge that underpins—and can undermine—our theoretical practices. And while all make their own claims, they invite us to probe more deeply, to look beneath another layer as we engage together as writers, tutors, and critical thinkers in our ever shifting cultural contexts.